1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

group and sing the rapid Gunabibi rhythm that is used for the general "outside" camp.

2. Out in the nearby bush a Dua man whirls the mandelprindi. The sound is much like that of a bass viol: "Ah um um um um, ah um um um um."

The man whirling the bull roarer cannot be seen. The women and uninitiated are told that Muit, the great father, is calling out for the initiates (in the Djungguan they are told he is calling for the foreskin).

The bull roarer is whirled around the man's head from left to right as he slowly turns with it. He then stops and whirls it from right to left. This is continued for as long a period as the man has strength and feels inclined.

At each pause in the sound of the bull roarer caused by the change in the direction of the whirling, the leader of the camp calls out in a high, shrill, falsetto voice:

"Ah! Yai! ah! Yai! ah! Yai!"

This is in a very quick tempo. The moment he stops, the women answer in high soprano voices:

"Le le le le le le le."

This creates a pattern of musical sound: mandelprindi (bass viol tone and rhythm), male leader's voice, and female chorus.

Sometimes the leader and the bull roarer cry out at the same time. Sometimes two Yiritja water snakes answer instead of the leader. This continues for a quarter of an hour, and sometimes much longer. By this time the women may be in their camps, still chorusing, and the group of men sitting down while smoking and talking.

3. The two Yiritja moiety men who are looked upon as Yiritja water snakes and who have been designated as messengers leave the main camp and go out into the men's ceremonial grounds, where they are supposed to stay until the end of the ceremony, except when they appear for ceremonial purposes at the main camp. Both wear white forehead bands, as do most of the men in the Gunabibi. With them go the boys who are to be initiated. The Yiritja messengers act as guards for the initiates, and also serve as instructors. The boys are not supposed to return to the main camp where the women are until the Gunabibi ceremony is over. They often do come back to the camp if the ceremony lasts longer than a few months, or if there is fear of night attack; but theoretically they must remain away from the women's

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

On his head is a high painted headdress ("dunce cap") made of ti tree bark, topped with a bunch of native companion's feathers. The bark is covered with red ocher. The body of the dancer is completely coated with human blood, and the body from the waist up, as well as the arms and the shoulders, is covered with perpendicular parallel lines of birds' down, and bunches of leaves are attached to the upper arm. The face may have two horizontal lines running from ear to ear above and below the eye, with one additional line that crosses the face at the chin.

The dancer advances with slow deliberate rhythm in a zigzag course as though he had heavy weights attached to his feet. As he changes his course and his flight across the field, he squats and shakes his shoulders, which makes the leaves on his arms quiver like the feathers of a bird. He kneels and faces the chorus. The leader and men surround him, knock off his headgear and rub his back to rub off some of the birds' down that has been glued on it, and the leader sings, "Gunabibi! Gunabibi!" in a voice which is impressively dramatic and sounds much like a modern priest chanting a prayer. ("Gunabibi" is one of the names used for Muit and Yurlunggur.)

2. The dancing stops. A man comes out with a bull roarer and whirls it. In camp the women answer in a trilling high soprano.

3. The bull roarer is put away, and the chorus and leader sit down in a circle and sing mandelprindi. A few men stand up and move back and forth behind the others. They have their stone spears attached to their spear-throwers. They are supposed to be fighting men. The leader stands in front of all. The following song sequence, the heart of the Gunabibi ceremony and often repeated, is gone through for the first time.

Sea gull	male, female, and eggs
A small snake (bolokmi)	male, female, and eggs
Native companion	male, female, and eggs
Small rock python (wirtit)	male, female, and eggs
Muit (python totemic spirit)	male, female, and eggs
Small fresh-water snake	male, female, and eggs
Sea gulls	male, female, and eggs
A small snake (bolokmi)	male, female, and eggs
Sea eagle (dimala)	male, female, and eggs
Rock python (Wirtit)	male, female, and eggs

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

laid his head back and went straight to sleep. This story indicates again how sure everyone is that the totemic spirit is about during the time of the ceremonies which celebrate his power.

H. The Ceremonial Exchange of Wives

1. Distant tribal brothers exchange wives.
2. The camp dance of the sexual pair and the exchange of gifts.
3. The night of ceremonial intercourse.

1. When the men from distant clans come in to see and participate in the Gunabibi ceremony, the older men, if they do not know their kinship to one another, work out their tribal relationships after much talk; this is mental exercise appreciated by all the more intelligent Murngin. When a local man discovers that a certain visitor from a far clan is his tribal brother, he sends his younger brother to inform this person that he may have the local man's wife for ceremonial copulation at the end of the Gunabibi ceremony. He sends presents along with the younger brother. The recipient, either through his own younger brother or through the messenger, offers his own wife in exchange, and also sends presents.

This exchange of wives for ceremonial intercourse at the close of the Gunabibi serves as the grand finale of the entire ceremony. As a consequence, it is considered very dangerous and is surrounded with a fairly intricate ritual.

The above is the formal and correct way of exchanging wives for ceremonial purposes, but there are several other methods. Sometimes men agree, without the intermediation of messengers, to exchange their wives. Sometimes a man and woman arrange matters without first gaining the consent of the women's husband; but without the final consent of the woman's spouse, this could not be recognized as legal procedure.

2. After the evening meal, and before the men return to the ceremonial grounds, they sit down in a half-circle around the fire and the women dance on the other side in front of them. The women and men wear circlets of fiber string around the head above the ears and across the forehead to indicate that the exchange arrangement has been made. While the women dance, various men arise, walk over to the women and hand them presents of food, red ocher, or some other object of value. The woman presented with such a gift is the one with whom arrangments have supposedly been made for ceremonial copulation.

The man who is the wife's partner later privately again gives her

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

Native Interpretation.—According to the natives' statements, the symbolization here is the same as in Section C when the kangaroo messengers leave the first time. 884

J. The Grub Dance Sequence

1. Several varieties of grubs are danced, as well as honeybees and other species. 884 535

(1) The acacia tree grub (Bar-ler-wir-lar); a headdress made of the sulphur-crested cockatoo is worn tor this dance. [293]
(2) A grub found in the ant beds (Gu-lung-a). Two men sit with their backs together, bend their torsos forward so that the head is as near the ground as possible, and then swing the body from left to right and back again.
(3) The lake and river floating-wood grub.
(4) Plain's grass grub. The bodies of the dancers are covered with small circular dots made by dipping the end of a bamboo rod into white paint and pressing it against the skin. [302]
(5) The lily grub.
(6) Small kangaroo (pardi-pardi).
(7) The Dua honeybee's honey found in a dead tree.
(8) The Dua bee's honey found in a green tree.
(9) The tiger snake (Dar-pa).
(10) The sulphur-crested cockatoo headdress (Kurt Kurt).
(11) The two Yiritja and two Dua kangaroos. The four sit down and the chorus surrounds them. The leader sings out the taboo names of the kangaroo. The chorus represents bushes and trees.

Native Interpretation.—The things sung in this all-inclusive list of songs are "the things the two women named and saw on their way."

K. The Settlement of Old Feuds

1. Old feuds are settled and a clown helps prevent open fighting and the destruction of the ritual. The ki-djin "language" is taught, and there is a repetition of earlier sections of the Ulmark. 884
2. The initiates are placed in a line, one behind the other.
3. Two lines of men throw the snail-shell rattles to each other.
4. A line of men and one of women on the boundary line of the male and female camps throw the snail rattles back and forth.

1. The above sequence of dances takes a month or six weeks to per-

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

301 237 *Fish-vertebrae Necklace.*—The vertebrae of the larger fish, including sharks, are cleaned, bored, covered with red ocher, and strung on a strand of fiber string which is tied tightly around the neck. These necklaces are worn by all members of the tribe on any occasion.

291 *Human-hair Belts.*—The Murngin wear a belt or band made of human hair which fits tightly across the upper portion of the buttocks and around the sides as far as the hip bones, where strings are attached and tied in front of the pubic hair. There are two types, a bundle or cylindrical one, and a flat or sewn variety. One continuous human hair string about fifty to sixty feet long is looped back and forth and the end of the bunch of loops wrapped for one-half inch with fiber string or human hair. The belt has a norm of about twenty-two inches, which varies from twelve to twenty-four inches. It has about fifty-five strands in it, but varies from twenty-four to sixty-five. Frequently the opossum pubic covering is attached to this belt, although usually it is worn by itself. A single small loop may be left at each end to which the fiber string for tying is attached.

The flat type of belt is made with one continuous string looped about thirty times. Vegetable fiber or human hair string is tied about each end of the bundle, which is flattened by stitching with bands of fiber string at about three-inch intervals. This allows the belt to fit snugly against the buttocks of the wearer and across the small of the back.

292 Ceremonial human hair belts are made by wrapping red parrot feathers over each of the strands in the belt to form a solid layer of red. The wrapping material is pandanus leaf. These belts are always made from the hair [765] of dead persons, which limits the size of the belt. The strands varied, in the few examined, from six to twelve in number. This belt is only worn on [784] ceremonial occasions and no woman may see it, even though it is made from the hair of either men or women.

291 301 *Pubic Aprons.*—The pubic apron, usually of opossum fur string, is less an item of clothing than an article of adornment. Although it is an expression of the people's modesty, it is classed with necklaces and bracelets rather than as a covering for the genitalia. It is composed of a basal strand and a fringe. The basal strand is usually of fiber string, but occasionally human hair is used. The fringe is made of one continuous strand of opossum fur looped about the basal cord. Each loop is twisted into a two-ply tassel, which is about ten inches long for men and five to six inches for women. The ends of the basal strand are tied in a large knot to keep the loops from slipping off. The apron is attached to a belt.

285 *Baskets.*—Since all baskets are carrying baskets equipped with carrying-strings, they also have been placed in the category of things worn.

All basketry in this district is made by the twining technique. The inner layer of the pandanus leaf and water-lily fiber are the two materials used. The latter is found only in the open-work type of basket, while the former is generally used for the tightly woven mesh, and occasionally also for the

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

The technique has not been lost, for several old men know how they are made.

Food Grinding Stone.—These small stones are used to grind up seeds or nuts gathered by the women and to break mussel shells. They are three or four inches in length, the same in width, and about two inches in thickness. A rock of the proper shape is used and no artificial shaping is done. However, there is a socializing agency at work, in the sense that a round rock flattened on the two opposite sides is preferred and, further, the grinding gradually works the center into a cavity; such a stone has now assumed value and is sought for by a woman in preference to a new stone. The depression is sometimes an inch and a half deep. The stone weighs about a pound and a half normally, but varies from one-half to two and a quarter pounds.

A larger-sized grinding stone also used by the native women is five inches by three inches and weighs about four pounds. It is also flattened on two sides.

The upper grinding stone, or grinder, is usually egg-shaped and is nothing more than an untreated smooth water stone. It has a diameter of about one and one-half inches and weighs from one-eighth to a quarter of a pound.

Camp Wells.—Two types of wells are dug during the dry season. The first is made more or less unconsciously by each person's excavating a small amount of earth from the bottom of a shallow water hole and continuing this process as the water dries up in the latter part of the season. The second variety is purposefully dug where water is known to be. It may be one or two feet in diameter or large enough to allow a man to get down in it to fill his paper-bark basin. Wells of this type sometimes reach a depth of four or five feet. Associated with an artificially constructed well is usually found the long-handled paper-bark container, made by attaching a long stick to an ordinary container with fiber string.

Bridges.—The Murngin often construct rude bridges by placing one to three tree trunks over the smaller streams about the camp.

7. Articles Used in Ceremonies

Feather Headdresses.—The chief materials used in making feather headdresses are resin, beeswax, fiber string, feathers of various birds, leg bones of birds, and wooden or sting-ray prongs. The feathers are hafted to the wooden, bone, or sting-ray pins with ironwood resin. White and black cockatoo tail feathers, the crest of the sulphur-crested cockatoo, emu, jabiru, egret, heron, native companion, goose, and duck feathers are the chief ones used, but feathers of other birds are also utilized.

The pin of the Gunabibi type of headdress is four to six inches long, and usually incised and ruddled if of wood. Sometimes the pin is made from the leg bone of a bird. The resin or beeswax hafting is in the shape

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

287 of a cone and is about one and a half to four inches long. It flares out at
292 the feather end, where it has a diameter of about three inches. The hafting material is always painted.

The diameter of the bunch of feathers has two norms, according to the species of birds' feathers used. The first norm ranges around fourteen to sixteen inches, and the second from twenty-two to twenty-six inches. The feathers of the former are emu, black and white cockatoo, black goose, native companion, ibis, egret, jabiru and heron. The latter is always composed of emu tail feathers. Sometimes, instead of being hafted to a pin, the feathers are attached to a loop of string large enough to go around the wearer's head and allow the headdress to hang down the back of his neck and body. The pin type is used in the Gunabibi ceremony, both for making the "head of Yermerlindi," the Great Father Snake, and for the male dancers. The latter wear the feathers attached to the peak of a "dunce cap."

The kurt kurt type of headdress has the same general shape as the Gunabibi type, except that the feathers are spread out fanwise, and the beeswax, which is usually used instead of resin, is flattened instead of conical. The pin is usually a sting-ray prong, since the barb on this adheres [237] to the wearer's hair more easily than wood or bone, but sticks and bones are sometimes used. The pin is about one to two inches long, the wax about three-quarters of an inch in length. The feather part of the headdress has two norms, one of which is eight inches and the other twelve. The smaller one is composed of crests of the sulphur-crested cockatoo, the twelve-inch one from the wings or tail of an emu. The kurt kurt is worn in such a manner that the fanlike feathers form a brim resembling that of a modern cap or eye shade.

287 The feather fan is made the same way as the kurt kurt headdress except
293 that stiff wing feathers of the jabiru or black goose are used instead of the softer feathers of the kurt kurt. A fan is used when making a fire or as a fly swatter. Often the lower wings are cut from the carcass of the jabiru or black goose and used as fans without further treatment.

711 *Rangas* (*Totemic Emblems*).—Technically the totemic emblems divide into two main classes. The fundamental structure of each is governed by the materials of which it is made. The first type is the wrapped paper-bark form, and the second the carved wooden type. An occasional third type is the stone ranga. Each may have additions to its main structure, but basically there is no variation. Still another type of ranga is formed when mythical paintings are placed on an article of the material culture which is the totem of the group (stone axe, bark boat, et cetera).

Designs are painted on all rangas.[5]

[5] The designs used and their meanings will not be discussed here, since we are considering only the technological processes.

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

765 [532] A foot below the "eyes" a band a half-inch wide is incised around the cylinder to represent the cicatrice on a native man's or woman's body.

The bones of the dead after exhumation are placed inside the coffin, a hole is dug a foot or so in the ground, and the log placed upright in the hole.

764 [53] *Grave Posts.*—A tree is felled and a log of the appropriate length cut from it. The post may be uncarved or a series of incisions may be made at the top of it to give it the appearance of a carved "head" with one or more necks.

The grave posts are placed over the grave of the dead, or they may be erected in the camp of a mourner to express his feeling of sorrow for the loss of his relation.

Measurements:

Length: adult, four to five feet; child, three and one-half feet.

Diameter: three to six inches.

765 [531] *Bark Coffin.*—The inner bark of a stringy-bark tree is soaked with water and heated over a fire, then formed into a cylinder with the inside of the bark turned out. It is stuffed with grass to keep it in shape and prevent it from splitting. The bones are placed in it and its two edges sewn together with pandanus fiber and a bone awl. The whole surface is covered with red ocher and painted with the totemic design of the deceased. The coffin is two feet long and four or five inches in diameter.

778 *Plank Ranga.*—Floating planks brought in on the tide, possibly from New Guinea, are of special totemic significance, and some of them are made into rangas by painting a design on them. The boards of a modern European box are now sometimes used in the same manner.

292 287 *Bark Belts.*—A strip of stringy bark about two inches in width, with a circumference great enough to reach about the body of a man, is soaked in water and held over a fire to make it pliable and to smooth its surface. It is then bent into its permanent shape and tied around the wearer. The ends are tied with fiber string and the belt is held in place by knotting the strings across the abdomen of the wearer. The belts are painted and used in ceremonies.

765 *Mourning Mast.*—The mast is supposed to represent the one used by the Malay in their sailing vessels when they visited southern Arafura waters.

The mast is made from a long eucalyptus sapling and is about fourteen and a half feet high and three inches in diameter. The tree is barked first and then cut to leave a protruding oblong band around the circumference a third of the way from the top. The band is decorated with the totemic designs of the deceased. Fiber strings are tied to the top of the post and represent mast ropes.

[531]

796 *Barnumbir Stick.*—A stick about the length of a spear is cut with a diameter of three-quarters of an inch and is sharpened at one end. It is

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
OI17 Murngin OI17

VIA. YERMERLINDI, THE PYTHON'S EMBLEMS IN THE GUNABIBI.

VIB PREPARING A DANCER FOR THE GUNABIBI CEREMONY.
(See Section C 1, page 295.)

6: Berndt E-5 (1946-1947) 1951
O117 Murngin O117

On the same evening, the young boys "passing through" the Kunapipi are placed on the heaped-up earth beside the *ba'uma* (*kanala*), and a shallow trench, some fifty feet long, is extended from one end. The *jelmalandji* have not yet been brought out. Various groups of men, representing mainly opossums, dance down this trench towards the boys. The initiates are moved to the shallow trench, and the men dance along it into the *ba'uma*. Then the boys are moved and placed in the *ba'uma* itself: this is the core of their Kunapipi experience. They are covered with bark and told to go to sleep; and as they lie there, "covered up in the hut like the Wauwalak Sisters", men dance the yam, opossum, wild honey, rat, wallaby, iguana, native companion and kangaroo - all those animals, birds, reptiles and vegetables which the Wauwalak attempted to cook. They dance down the shallow trench and almost on to the boys.

Then, suddenly, the bark that covers the boys is removed: they are dazed, as if from sleep. The older Kunapipi leaders step forward and, taking sweat from under their armpits, rub the palms of their hands across the eyes of the boys. They tell them to look up: "See, the Julunggul are emerging from the waters!"

"Which way?" they ask.

As they look they see the two Snakes standing beside the *ba'uma*, each supported by one man: these are the two *jelmalandji*, one the Julunggul and the other the "palm" tree. The boys are "very surprised", asking "What's this? Where did they come from?"

"They are the *jelmalandji*", reply the old leaders. And the two *dua* men holding the *jelmalandji* begin to shake them, "making the Snakes dance".

"Ah! ah!" The boys keep staring up at the great towering *jelmalandji*.

Then the men dance a series of totemic dances, similar to those mentioned above, before the *jelmalandji* and the boys.

These are followed by the spectacular "pokiti" head-dress dance, performed by two of the older men. They wear tall, conically shaped head-dresses, built up on top of the head from a basis of grass or bark pads, bound tightly with human-hair twine so that they taper to a point; this in turn is decorated with arm blood upon which down has been stuck to form the Snake design, and cockatoo or native companion feathers are attached to the apex. The word "pokiti" is pidgin English; the real "outside" secular name (widely known) is *kundja*, and the "inside" sacred name *milali*; when the two old men dance together they are called *jalwaru-* (or *jalwul*) *milali*. The actors are decorated with birds' down, and bunches of leaves are attached to their upper arms.

The "pokiti" itself represents the short pandanus or screw palm, seen by the Wauwalak, growing in the swamp at Murûwul: the movement of the head-dress in the dance signifies the pandanus

6: Berndt E-5 (1946-1947) 1951
OI17 Murngin OI17

796 moving up and down with the swell of the water. The two actors dance towards the *jelmalandji* and the boys, holding carved wands
292 that represent the pandanus shoots. They move forward slowly, their "pokiti" slightly waving, like the pandanus gently swaying in
535 the calm swirl of the "spring" waters. When their actions are quick-
881 ened their heads shake violently, and this is the pandanus rustling and bending in the strong "spring" waters[7] resulting from the rains sent by Julunggul. The feathers at their apex are the snakes' heads, appearing between the pandanus clumps.

When they reach the *ba'uma* both actors kneel and are surrounded by the singing and stick-beating leader and other participants. They shake their "pokiti" until these become loose, and the leader knocks them off and rubs himself against the actors (that is, he is spiritually one with the totemic dancers). The young boys, and others who are not fully conversant with Kunapipi ritual, as well as visitors, are rubbed against the "pokiti" or against the decorated down on the actors' bodies; this contact transfers "power" (or the sacred essence of the Dreaming) from one to the other. Then the sacred *bukali* "power" (invocation) names are called over the actors, while they shake themselves, to the accompaniment of the beating sticks. Other dances follow, most of which concern the things seen by the Wauwalak at Muruwul.

Next comes the *djamala marciin*, or ritual fire-throwing. The term
796 *djamala* serves as an important link in all Kunapipi rituals, here and
372 elsewhere, for although it has lost its real significance at Yirrkalla it
881 still includes the throwing of fire-brands. In central-western Northern Territory, for example, Kunapipi ritual is divided into morning (day) and evening (night) ceremonies, the former termed *wilbibi* and the latter *djamalara* (*djamala* being a variation).[8]

In the Yirrkalla version of the Kunapipi, the throwing of fire-sticks by older men across the sacred ground, and over the *ba'uma* in which the boys sit, symbolizes the lightning sent by Julunggul; the Snake flashes the lightning over the camp in which the Sisters are resting.

Then two actors dance forward, representing the Wauwalak Sis-
796 ters; one has a paperbark pad which is the "child". From one side
881 of the ground another actor appears; he is the Julunggul Snake, and moves slowly forward towards the "women", until he reaches

[192] 7. These strong waters are called secularly *ka'leta*, or in sacred speech *gumunggul*: the latter word is a corruption of the term *gumugu*, which is of very general use in the central-western Northern Territory Kunapipi. For a further definition see Chapters X and XI.

8. For a further example of the widespread use of this word, see R. and C. Berndt, *Sexual Behaviour in Western Arnhem Land*, Chapter IV, Section X. In that area it has been corrupted to *djamu:luk* or *jumalak*, and refers to a secularized promiscuous ceremony. Real *djamalara* singing includes some of
[533] the most beautiful sacred rhythms in Aboriginal Australia.

6: Berndt E-5 (1946-1947) 1951
OI17 Murngin OI17

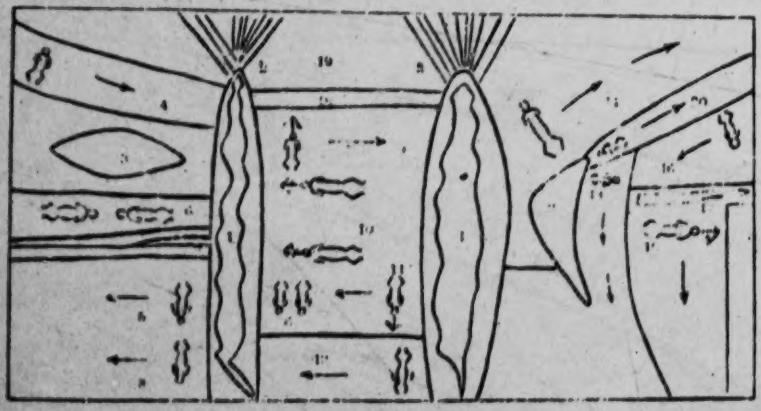
Julunggul; both are topped with feathered ornaments. The *gundaru* *jelmalandji* arises from the *nanggaru* place (9), while the *darlpa* *jelmalandji* arises some little distance away, between the *nanggaru* and the *kanala* (3): in actual practice, both would stand together beside either the *nanggaru* or the *kanala*. On the concave side of the *kanala* (3) are ranged *jiritja* moiety *wari* novices (4) for the Kunapipi, while along the track leading to the *kanala* are *muru dua* moiety novices (5): they do not yet enter the crescent trench.

Parallel to the *kanala*, and to one side of the *nanggaru*, are *dua* dancing postulants (6) representing opossums. This is the important Kunapipi opossum dancing; men with long paperbark penes (10) attached to their waist-bands, or constructed upon their own penes, are male opossums; the others are the females (11). In the dancing they simulate sexual intercourse, erecting their bark penes, and so on.

On the opposite side of the *nanggaru* are *jiritja* moiety *keiango:r* men (7) who watch the erecting of the *jelmalandji*. This is the group that prepared these emblems for the *dua* moiety (6).

Within the *nanggaru* (9), the opossum actors (6) are seen dancing, having gradually moved up along the sacred ground and entered the "billabong" (12). Then they emerge from the *nanggaru* and encircle it (8); they begin to cover it in with their dancing feet, destroying it completely. One dancing opossum actor (13) wears a conical-shaped head-dress topped with feathers, as should all the other participants.

The second drawing,[4] Plate I and text figure 3, in red, blue,



Text Figure 3.

Key Sketch to illustrate Plate I.

Opossum dancing on the sacred ground, with destruction of the Snake Emblems.

4. Reference: No. 109, *Field Notes*, Book 18, Series A, R. Berndt.

6: Berndt E-5 (1946-1947) 1951
OI17 Murngin OI17

yellow, black and green crayon, concerns the final opossum dancing, and the destroying of the *jelmalandji* emblems.

One *jelmalandji* (1 *a*) is the *gundaru*, and the other (1 *b*) the *daripa*, each topped with feathers. The non-sacred term for the *gundaru jelmalandji* is *nungganambi*, and for the *daripa jelmalandji*, *murungun* or *dalaru*, both of which may be used before women and children in the main camp: to use the term *jelmalandji* in a secular environment would bring sickness on the speaker. To the right of the *gundaru* is the *kanala* (2) crescent trench; to the left of the *daripa* is the *nanggaru*, (3), and on one side of this a row of *wari jiritja* novices (4) make their appearance, wearing *marapipi* headbands: they watch two actors (6) on the opposite side of the *nanggaru*, performing the *dua* moiety *gundaru* snake dance (of the male and female Julunggul Snakes). While the two actors dance, the *jiritja* bullroarer (7) is swung behind them; below it are the *muru dua* novices (5); and below these, in a line, are the "big" men (8) who act as guardians to the novices, and take them to the Kunapipi dancing. These guardians are very strict, and may beat the novices in their charge should they misbehave.

Between the two *jelmalandji* is a row of dancing postulants (9), representing the *gulwiri* "cabbage" or "wild coconut" palm, which swayed in the running waters at Muruwul (*vide* Chapter III). The actors wear elaborate head-dresses that symbolize this tree, and later they dance towards the *murlk* hut (19) of the two Wauwalak sisters. Opposite this row of dancers is another row (11), also representing the *gulwiri* palm. Between them (10) lie two other *gulwiri* dancers performing a ritual dance: they enter the ground kneeling, and lie upon one another "like the roots and trunks of these trees", entwined and rubbing together with the force of the running water. These two central actors, as well as the others, are watched by the *wari* and *muru* novices, who have been brought up to take another position facing the dancing ground. Two novices (6) are beside the *gulwiri* actors (11), while the others are ranged in a row below (12).

Above the track leading to the *kanala* (2) and on its concave side are ranged *muru* and *wari* novices (13), taking their positions for viewing the final opossum dancing and the *jelmalandji*. To one side (14) are their guardians; the novices (16) below the *kanala* track are standing with their hands tucked under their arms.

On the concave side of the *kanala*, beyond the novices (13), is a row of dancing men performing the *gunga* pandanus dance, with head-dresses similar to those used in the *gulwiri*. When this is completed, other neophytes begin to dance down the *kanala* track (20): they are opossums, and this track is also called the "opossum track".

The *jelmalandji* are pushed and fall over across the *kanala*; but they are caught with the stick (18), and impelled back, so that they

6: Berndt E-5 (1946-1947) 1951
OI17 Murngin OI17

142
292
531
302
231

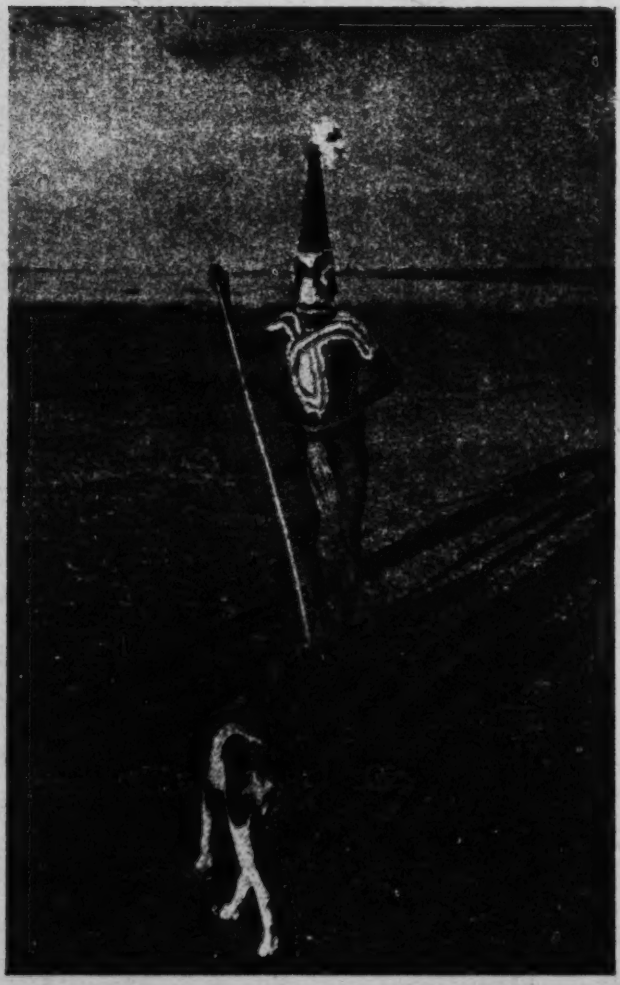


PLATE XV

[p. 84 (F)]
[For caption see category 116, p. xiii]

9: Thomson E-5 (1935-1943)1949
OI17 Murngin OI17

conservative, and this fact leaves a strong local stamp on their material culture. Certain types of utensils may be found only in one local area, and even spears, of which about 30 different types occur in Arnhem Land, can often be distinguished by a local preference for such minor traits as the use of one particular bast fibre (*duiyärrk*) for lashing, or of one resin—whether *ŋotjamän*, (*Canarium australasicum*), *maipin bortj*[33] (*Erythrophloeum*), or the hard, brittle, black resin of *lännapu*, (*Callitris*), "Cyprus Pine", for each of which there may be a strong bias in a certain local area. The use of such materials is laid down by tradition, and the aboriginal craftsman is conservative, not much given to experiment. He follows the pattern which is traditional because he believes it was established by the *wäŋärr* (his totemic ancestors).

In contrast with this extreme conservatism in the use of raw materials and in the technique employed in material culture, it is sometimes surprising to find suddenly, in an area as remote from outside contacts as far Eastern and Central Arnhem Land were when I first went to live with these people in 1935, 36 and 37, such elements as boomerangs, (*källi-gälli*), which are not made in this territory, bearing all the marks of authenticity of specimens from Katherine or Daly Waters—some two or three hundred miles away to the south or south-west. And these are accompanied by such articles as the closely-woven forehead fillets called *källämba*, heavy and closely-woven "bibs" or aprons called *mätta mätta*, *märtät* or *tjänauwo*, worn around the neck, suspended on the chest during fights, and *bäkkürämma* or *bäkka* (spears, having heads of ironwood with very long

[33] *Bortj* is really liver and is apparently applied to this resin on account of the practice of moulding it into large lumps suggesting the lobes of a liver.

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
OI17 Murngin OI17

283 made on the same principle. Three men each take a length of fibre. They twist them and pass them one to another to form a single length of rope. As the rope lengthens it is passed over the limb of a tree and held taut by a fourth man.

286 415 [237] [531] Woven pandanus dilly-bags are pleasing and effective examples of artistic workmanship. Sacred bags are small, but beautifully woven, and are adorned with parrot feathers or fur and sometimes totemically painted. Women make most of them and some are so closely woven that they hold water. The majority, however, are large work bags which hang down their backs and are used to carry yams, shells, roots, and small animals. Another bag is made from string, is similar to the well-known onion bag, and will hold thirty or forty pounds of yams.

292 285 293 [513] The curious 'nganmara' is peculiar to Arnhem Land. It is a house, an umbrella, a garment, a shelter from the wind and rain, a mat on which to sleep, and it is conveniently carried under the arm. This conical straw umbrella mat is woven from pandanus palm; it is circular, with an apex two feet high, and gives some slight protection from sun, wind, or rain. When the nganmara is thrown open on the ground a woman and child can be completely hidden under it. I first saw an nganmara when I was on the King River, where the woman who had it was hunting with her friends. When I asked her to show me the mat under her arm, she calmly handed me the nganmara, which was her only clothing. Knowing that strangers were in the camp, some of the women had politely donned leafy twigs, but this lady relied on her nganmara and deftly swung it from under her arm.

276 [237] In west Arnhem Land, tobacco pipes are made from large crab claws. More elaborate pipes are also made by boring the pithy centre from a soft jungle shrub and plugging